

# Transportation Focus Area

## Introduction:

Travel demand continues to grow faster than our population, and faster than our ability to provide transportation system improvements. The growth in travel demand has resulted in increased traffic congestion, poor driving habits and, consequently, an increase in frustration among drivers. The overall safety of our system remains a major concern to all of us. Neighborhood streets are deteriorating with age and many Tucson neighborhoods still lack adequate lighting, sidewalks, and storm drains. Although ridership levels on public transit are increasing slightly, service levels have not been able to keep pace with needs, so overcrowding on certain peak hour trips is a growing problem.

Available funding for transportation falls short of existing needs—both in the City of Tucson and throughout the region. Funding for new projects and services is also strained due to the growing costs of operation and maintenance. The challenge of stretching inadequate resources is further complicated by the historic pattern of unincorporated areas being developed and then annexed into the City, resulting in inadequate transportation infrastructure that requires costly retrofitting and improvement. A better plan would be to locate mixed-use housing, retail services, and jobs closer together to encourage the use of public transit, bicycle or multi-use paths, and related alternative modes of transportation that provide options other than continued dependence on automobile use.

The City of Tucson currently lacks a local, dedicated funding source for its transportation needs. A Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) has been authorized and will develop a regional transportation plan. Along with the plan, the RTA will develop a companion proposal for an increase in the County's sales tax that will go before voters in early 2006. This effort will help address regional mobility but will still leave the City with a funding shortfall for the repair and refurbishment of our existing infrastructure needs. Revenue sources for these long-neglected services must be identified and secured.

## Strategic Policy Statements:

1. Seek and obtain funding, and technological, informational, operational and other types of resources necessary to improve the transportation system.
2. Provide leadership, in collaboration with other agencies within the region, to address local and regional transportation system needs.
3. Develop more effective transportation systems that support alternative land-use patterns and lead to a more efficient travel system.
4. Employ Community Character and Design policies in transportation projects.

## 1. Seek and obtain funding, and technological, informational, operational and other types of resources necessary to improve the transportation system.

### Priority Projects:

**Road Recovery - Construct and Repair 40 miles of City Streets** – This program consists of pavement rehabilitation for 40 miles of the City's streets to protect our infrastructure investment and improve ride quality. Pavement rehabilitation will employ a variety of strategies depending on the existing pavement condition. These will vary from the application of a thin pavement resurfacing material such as micro-surfacing, to milling the surface of the existing pavement and resurfacing with a new rubberized hot-mix asphalt overlay, to a complete

removal and replacement of the existing pavement structure. An extensive public outreach program will guarantee that property owners adjacent to the construction sites are notified prior to the start of the project, and thank you letters will be sent, notifying them when the project is complete. Local media will also be notified of all project schedules and asked to help assure that the public is kept well informed.



**Van Tran Service Improvements** – The Van Tran Service Improvement Project entails adding additional necessary resources including but not limited to vans, drivers, dispatchers and supervisory staff. This will ensure that ADA-eligible Van Tran passengers are never denied rides on Van Tran when requested; that they are picked up in a timely manner; and that they are not subjected to trips that are excessively long in relation to comparable rides on the fixed-route Sun Tran system.

**Federal and State Legislative Agenda** – The City of Tucson benefits annually from the designation of funds for projects targeted by Congress through the Transportation Appropriations bill. Lobbyists for the City follow the legislative agenda to protect regional revenue sources and to seek support for funding City of Tucson priorities.

## 2. Provide leadership, in collaboration with other agencies within the region, to address local and regional transportation system needs.

### Priority Projects:

**Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)** – The newly established Regional Transportation Authority provides an historic new structure and opportunity for elevating the regional transportation system above the jurisdiction level and providing a major new funding source for developing the regional system in the future. The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a detailed, multi-modal long-range plan for future transportation investments throughout eastern Pima County. The City will support the Regional Transportation Authority in updating the RTP and building public support for the RTA's funding proposal. The current RTP update will result in a plan for investing public revenue in our region's roadways, bikeways, bus, pedestrian and rail systems through the year 2030. The RTP will integrate the policies, land-use implications and transportation plans of local jurisdictions, and will integrate a new funding source with the revenue sources currently available to implement the plan. It is anticipated that the RTA will forward the RTP and a funding proposal to the voters in the spring of 2006.

**Pima County 1997 Bond Program Projects within the City** – The goal of this project is to secure guaranteed County funding for City Projects and to convert appropriate projects to management and construction by City staff. This will involve the implementation of the understanding established in the May 2004 Memorandum of Understanding

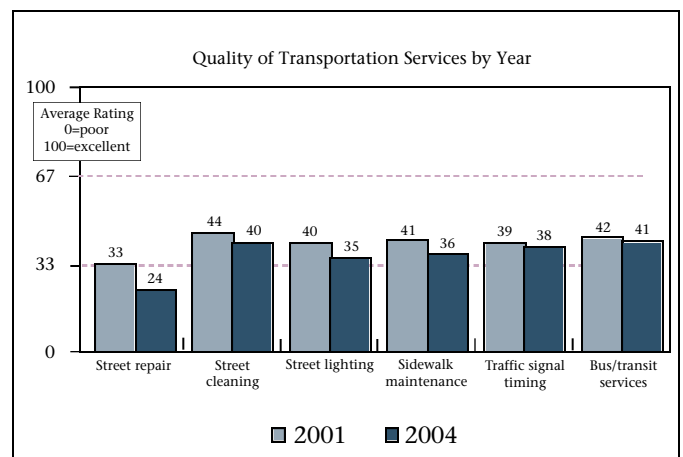
between Pima County and the City of Tucson for Alvernon Way, Valencia Road, Country Club, Kino Boulevard at 22nd Street and Broadway Boulevard. In the case of Broadway Boulevard, the recommendations of the 1990 Broadway Corridor plan will be updated accordingly to address opportunities associated with potential advanced mass transit systems in the future.

### Project Construction Coordination with Pima County and ADOT

– This project will involve establishing an on-going committee, with membership comprised of construction managers and traffic engineers from various governmental agencies (City, County and State), to provide a structured forum within which the various agencies can meet. These joint monthly-as-needed meetings would address schedule coordination for each entity's respective current and upcoming construction projects with the intent to minimize delays to, and frustrations of, the traveling public and to help reduce air pollution.

### Undergrounding Tucson Electric Power

**Facilities** – As new transportation infrastructure is built, overhead TEP facilities are relocated underground with funds set aside from utility franchise fees. Local partner agencies will coordinate efforts to place existing utilities underground at strategic locations. These funds will be reserved for undergrounding projects that will have substantial visual impact.





### **Sidewalk and Landscaping Improvements –**

The City of Tucson will provide new sidewalks and landscaping improvements as part of a larger effort by the City Department of Transportation to improve both safety and aesthetics throughout the community. This project consists of the construction of missing sidewalk sections, installation of irrigation lines and controllers, median rock work and the planting of trees throughout the City.

### **3. Develop more effective transportation systems that support alternative land use patterns and lead to a more efficient travel system.**

#### **Priority Projects:**

##### **Barraza-Aviation Parkway – 4th Avenue**

**Underpass Construction** – A new underpass will be constructed to accommodate two lanes of traffic, two tracks for the historic trolley, two bicycle lanes, and two wheelchair-accessible sidewalks underneath the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. The existing historic Fourth Avenue Underpass will be refurbished with improved lighting and decorative paving and restricted to pedestrian use. Landscaped plazas will be constructed at both ends of the project.



### **4. Employ Community Character and Design policies in transportation projects.**

#### **Priority Projects:**

##### **Downtown Tucson Intermodal Center –**

The Downtown Tucson Intermodal Center is a phased effort that includes facilities for multiple transportation elements in the eastern end of the downtown area. Passenger trains, inter-city bus service, intra-city bus service, an historic trolley, bicycle, pedestrian, shuttle, rental car and parking facilities will all be accommodated. The project also includes retail, restaurant and office space, parking and a transportation museum. The project will be accomplished in phases.



##### **Update/Implement Transportation Design**

**Guidelines** – The City's Transportation Department will revise existing transportation project guidelines to include roadside landscaping and development standards that are consistent with the Community Character and Design element of the General Plan.